

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on July 25, 2013.

Members Present:

Lars Nielson, Jr.
Nancy Aposhian
Dilworth Brinton, Jr.
Joe Cooper
David Dean

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti
Karina Wilhelm
Peggy Wilson
Alyssa Yingling

Members Absent:

Merlin Ellis

Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein Rob Schultz
Tom Wilson Mandy Buscas
Jean Kaminski

Lars Nielson, Jr., Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Lars Nielson, Jr., Chair, asked for any corrections to the minutes of May 28. There being none, Dr. Robbi D. Venditti made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Peggy Wilson seconded. The Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of May 28 and they will be posted on the city's website.

Public Comments: No members of the public were present.

Introduction of Two New Board Members – David Dean and Dilworth Brinton, Jr. – Lars Nielson, Jr.

David Dean – David Dean has been a Mesa resident since 1998. He has a PhD in History and is a History Professor at the University of Phoenix moving to Grand Canyon University for the next fiscal year. He served on the Historic Preservation Committee for seven years and is now ready to serve the community on the Arts and Cultural Advisory Board.

Dilworth Brinton, Jr. – Dilworth Brinton, Jr. is a fifth generation Mesa resident. He is a local historian and comes from a family of civic-minded people. He spent eight years on the Parks Board, six years on the Library Board, and has been a member of Mesa Hohokam's for 35 years. Mr. Brinton grew up in Mesa and has been active in the dramatic arts for many years. He was stage manager of Mesa Musical Theater for 20 years; President of Mesa Little Theater (now Mesa Encore Theatre) for three-four years; and at one time had done a show in every theater venue in Mesa. He is also a Rotarian. He is looking forward to serving on the Board and working to make Mesa better.

Take Action – Elect a Chair for FY13-14 – Lars Nielson, Jr.

Peggy Wilson nominated Dr. Robbi D. Venditti as the FY13-14 Chair. Lars Nielson, Jr., Chair, called for a vote, and the Board members present unanimously approved Dr. Robbi D. Venditti as the new Board Chair for FY13-14.

Lars Nielson, Jr. announced that this would be his final meeting with the Board. Although he had one more year to serve, he has accepted a position in Texas. He expressed his pleasure serving on the Board for the past five years. Cindy Ornstein thanked him for his many years of service and dedication to the Arts and Culture Department.

Take Action – Elect a Vice-Chair for FY13-14 – Lars Nielson, Jr.

Lars Nielson, Jr. nominated Peggy Wilson as the FY13-14 Vice-Chair. Lars Nielson, Jr. Chair, called for a vote and the Board members present unanimously approved Peggy Wilson as the new Vice-Chair for FY13-14.

Information and Discussion – Consider Volunteering for National Geographic Live Ticket Waivers for Title I Schools – Mandy Buscas

National Geographic Live awards Mesa Arts Center (MAC) \$6,000 in tickets (averaging approximately 750 tickets per show) and \$5,000 for bus transportation to Title I schools in the region for the National Geographic Live school shows. Each National Geographic Explorer has one or two school shows the day after the evening performance. The school shows are age appropriate and the schools receive a curriculum guide for that particular show prior to the performance so they can prepare the students and discuss what they learned after the performance. These Title I funds allow many students to come who would never have the opportunity to come to an arts center and see a live performance.

Dilworth Brinton, Jr. asked if MAC received real money for the tickets. Ms. Buscas said yes, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Arizona sponsors the National Geographic Live series each year, including the school shows.

David Dean asked if the \$6,000 in tickets and \$5,000 for busses is completely used. Ms. Buscas responded, yes, it is all used by the requesting schools; not every school that applies is awarded tickets or transportation. Each school can request up to \$140 toward a bus.

MAC is currently receiving applications and Ms. Buscas asked for two Board members to participate on a panel on August 12 from 1 – 4 p.m. to select the schools to be awarded. Peggy Wilson and Nancy Aposhian volunteered. Dilworth Brinton, Jr. volunteered to be a backup, if needed.

Information and Discussion – Review the Panel Ratings and Funding Recommendations for the Creative Economy Fund – Cindy Ornstein

The Creative Economy Fund is an in-kind rental program to benefit arts organizations in Arizona. This year's panel met to review the applications; the panel was Terry Benelli, Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation, Mesa resident, and active member of the community; Jennifer Duff, who sits on the Arizona Museum of Youth Friends Board, a downtown Mesa resident, and Mesa business owner; and Jessica Rajko from the Arizona Commission on the Arts and a working artist. This year we received more applications than ever before.

Lars Nielson, Jr. facilitated the panel and he explained the process. Each panelist reviews all the applications and is assigned specific applications to evaluate and present their findings to the other panelists. There are five criteria and each one has a 1 – 5 rating. The overall rating is averaged to determine their score and their score determines the percentage the organization receives. There were 13 organizations that received an award and three that ratings below the threshold needed. Those that did receive an award were: Ballet Etudes, Christian Youth Theater, Class 6 Theatre, East Valley Children's Theatre, Greater Phoenix SPEBSQSA (Barbershop Quartets and Chorus), Mesa Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, Metropolitan Youth Symphony, Phoenix Boys Choir, Phoenix Opera, Phoenix Symphon6y, Salt River Brass, Southwest Shakespeare Company, and Youth Symphony of the Southwest. The three that did not receive an award were Arizona Deseret Choir, Heritage Academy, and Mesa City Band; however, Heritage Academy is a K-12 school and can apply to the ACES program through the Mesa Arts Center Foundation. The ACES program awards support to educational institutions and Heritage Academy's application was forwarded to ACES.

David Dean asked if city staff provides a workshop or guideline for the applicants. Ms. Ornstein stated that we do not offer a formal workshop, but we do provide clear instructions that include information on who to contact if they have questions. Ms. Ornstein added that, in the future, she is not averse to offering a workshop for those who would like to have a conversation about the program that would help them submit a successful application.

David Dean asked if there was anything the Board could do to increase the amount the City gives to the Creative Economy Fund making space available to even more arts organizations. Ms. Ornstein replied that if they felt as a body, or as an individual, that it was important to the vibrancy of our community to continue the program and increase the amount the city provides, it would be good to convey that to Council. Ms. Ornstein added that she thought the amount is not that far off in terms of meeting the request of those with high ratings.

Creative Economy Fund guidelines call for higher call for higher scores for the arts organizations that show how they will engage the community in their program. The organizations that don't fare as well are those that do not show how they will engage the community.

Dilworth Brinton, Jr. asked how many of the grants came from new applicants. Ms. Ornstein responded that this year we had several new applicants; however, they were not new users of Mesa Arts Center (MAC), but because of the recession, they were forced to cut back and were not able to perform at MAC any longer. Two or three stated in their application that without the help of Creative Economy Fund, they would not be able to present at MAC. The question then becomes, if they did not receive the full amount they asked for, would they still be able to present their program at MAC. Nancy Aposhian asked what would happen if the funds are not all used. Ms. Ornstein said that then she would go back and redistribute the unused funds to others.

Dilworth Brinton, Jr. asked if there was any bias to a Mesa organization as opposed to outside of Mesa. Ms. Ornstein replied that there is no advantage, because one goal of the Program is to encourage new organizations to provide programming at MAC.

Another part of the program is to bring new experiences to Mesa and its citizens, such as Phoenix Opera. Last year was the first time a program by Phoenix Opera was offered in Mesa. Ms. Ornstein added that there were approximately six applicants that are outside of Mesa.

Peggy Wilson asked about the required final report and if that had an impact on a current application. Ms. Ornstein commented that they must submit a report, but it does not have a bearing on a new application. The report is to show if they did what they said they were going to do, if they were successful, and if not, what they could do differently. It was

suggested that if a Board member attended one of the performances and wanted to give a “testimonial” regarding the program for the file, that could be useful. It was asked if the Board could receive a notice when a program was about to be presented. Ms. Ornstein said that staff could do that.

Information – Distribute Arts & Culture Talking Points for 2013-2014 – Rob Schultz

Copies of this year’s factual talking points were sent in the Board packet for Arizona Museum for Youth and Arizona Museum of Natural History. Mr. Schultz does not have the year-end revenue numbers to-date for Mesa Arts Center talking points and as soon as he receives those, they will be forwarded to the Board.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY) – Sunnee O’Rork

- Staff completed the installation and opening of the “Dream On” exhibition that included their first artist-in-residence, Luran VanDuren, who created the cloud sculpture that people can write their dreams/wishes on.
- The new ArtZone area has been installed and refreshed with new activities.
- AMY had 10 volunteers from the City of Mesa Mayor’s Summer of Service Program assist with the “Dream On” exhibition.
- AMY welcomed two new Gallery Educators, Aaron Frazer and Katelyn Jaworski, as well as a new summer intern, Edan Maoz, who is an art history major from Northern Arizona University.
- AMY staff and Jennifer Duff of the Friends Board met with Terry Benelli of NEDCO to discuss partnership opportunities.
- AMY staff met with the conference planning committee members for the May 2014 Association of Children’s Museum National Conference from May 14 – 16, 2014. AMY and the Phoenix Children’s Museum will co-host the conference and there will be a reception the first night of the conference at AMY.
- AMY had an anonymous donor this spring who offered to give AMY \$100,000 for the i.d.e.a. Museum, if the City of Mesa would match that offer. AMY created a seven-year business plan and presented it to Council. The plan and \$100,000 from the City was approved by Council. Sunnee O’Rork thanked Cindy Ornstein for her help in accomplishing this goal.

Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) – Rob Schultz for Tom Wilson

- Plans are moving forward on the remodel of the Federal Building on Macdonald Street. The renovated building will house exhibition space for the Mesa Historical Museum and storage space for AzMNH. The architectural drawings of exterior facades are close to being completed. The project is planned to be completed in time for the Light Rail opening in 2015.
- The Museum ended the fiscal year on a strong note with revenue reaching almost \$650,000 vs. \$620,000 last year, and participation at about 145,000 – slightly down from last year’s banner total of 155,000. The increase is partially attributed to social media.
- On a sad note, the Museum lost a longtime, dedicated, and professional staff member, Alice Jung, who passed away.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) finished the year with approximately 33,000 visitors, up approximately 1,600 from last year. The key factor is due to free admission and a special effort made during spark! Mesa Festival of Creativity to welcome visitors into the Museum.
- Participation in youth and adult classes was up by 14% over last year. Final revenue figures were not yet available.
- Festival and free concert participation was also up substantially over last year, more than double. Free concerts went from approximately 2,500 to 7,500. One particular concert in the spring drew 1,100 people, occurring during spark!
- Artspace is a non-profit organization from MN who develop downtown work, live, exhibition, and performance space for artists and/or arts organizations. They are looking at a project in Mesa. The next step is to conduct a Market Study beginning in late September, for which artists and creative businesses will be asked to complete a survey asking whether or not they would consider moving to Mesa, if there was a facility built, as well as other needs related to the project. Rob Schultz and Cindy Ornstein have met with numerous area cities to ask if they will help get the word out to their artists in their areas, and they are on board. Once the survey kicks off in September, it is expected to be completed within five months. At that time, we will know if there is enough need and interest to move forward to obtain land, construction, etc. In addition to the general information gathered from The Market Study, it will drill down information to help Artspace understand what kind of building is needed, how much space, how much the artists would be willing to pay for rent, etc. Cindy noted that in an Artspace project, the City makes a commitment to raise money for the pre-feasibility study, Market Study, and pre-development. After that, it becomes an Artspace project and they assume all financial responsibility.

- The fourth cycle of the InFlux project gets underway the week of July 29. InFlux is a consortium of cities that put out a call to artists and then select artists to install and display temporary Public Art projects mainly in vacant storefronts in the downtown area. At MAC, the artist installed her piece in the theater lobby by the Ikeda stairs. Dana Park has expressed interest in having an art piece in one of their vacant storefronts, so there may be two projects in Mesa for 2013-2014. In June, there were two buses that toured the sites (Phoenix, Glendale, Tempe, Scottsdale, Mesa, Chandler, and Goodyear). More cities are expected to participate next year as the program continues to grow.
- Rob Schultz and Mandy Buscas completed their visits to MAC's partner organizations that host the Creative Aging Program (East Valley Adult Resource Center, Oakwood Adult Day Care, and Fellowship Square) to see how the year went, where we can improve, etc. All three are enthusiastic to continue in the coming year. Mr. Schultz and Ms. Buscas also met with the two primary teaching artists, Elizabeth Johnson and Tessa Windt, to analyze progress over the past year. As a result, MAC is adding a teaching artist and hoping to expand the service to our partners.

Joe Cooper asked if any of MAC's classes would be cut back in order to accommodate Benedictine University offering their classes at MAC. Mr. Schultz said, not at all, they are filling in where MAC does not have a class scheduled. They will only offer two classes this fall to get going. Dilworth Brinton, Jr. asked if any of the other colleges plan to use MAC space for classes. Cindy Ornstein answered that none of them offer a Fine Arts major other than Wilkes, who has a Masters in Fine Arts in Creative Writing and they have presented workshops/lectures at MAC. Having the Universities use MAC spaces is a wonderful opportunity for Mesa and for MAC; a win/win for everyone; it brings in revenue for MAC and allows them to use our spaces without having to build a facility for those classes on their campuses.

Director's Report – Cindy Ornstein

- Participation at MAC had another increase for the third year – total participation was 458,674 compared to last year at 387,000, an increase of 18%.

MAC is working closely with ASU Poly to build a multi-layered partnership. Beginning with the Season Kick-off on September 13, in conjunction with 2nd Friday in downtown Mesa, MAC is making it a "college night." The college students will be invited to come down and enjoy the night's festivities – ASU Poly is bringing several buses of students, and later will enjoy a party just for them at the Arizona Museum of Natural History on the rooftop. In the spring (when the i.d.e.a. Museum opens) we would like to offer another college event there that focuses on opportunities for students at the new Museum.

Other things happening with ASU Poly in the first year are a residency with spoken word artists that will go out to ASU Poly to do an event and an activity with students on their campus. At MAC, we are planning a Sound in the Ground concert where the students will program a post-event to the concert. MAC is offering several classes at ASU Poly that are open to the public, but will be held in the beautiful studios at ASU Poly creating a strong presence for MAC in southeast Mesa.

ASU Poly will work with Arizona Museum for Youth on an iproject (where students work with faculty, for credit, to create something for an outside organization) where they will be creating an interactive piece for the grand opening of the i.d.e.a. Museum.

At MAC, we are working with ASU Poly on a large iproject where they will be involved in the design of several components for the ArtPlace project on the north plaza of MAC campus.

On Monday, Rob Schultz and Cindy Ornstein visited Eastmark and met with DMB. They are also excited to partner with MAC. They have a community center and a meeting room that could be used as a classroom. They are also building an Amphitheater in the "Great Park" area. Eastmark is just around the corner from ASU Poly, and we are looking at how we can build our audiences in that area.

MAC has built a stronger partnership with Southwest Shakespeare Company, and they have committed to doing a three-week run of one of their shows on ASU Poly campus. It will be open to the public, but especially for the college community. The event is a win/win – good for Southwest Shakespeare, good for ASU Poly, and good for the community.

The ArtPlace project continues – the project will require a part-time Project Coordinator. Ms. Ornstein is in the final stages of interviewing for the position and hopes to have someone in place by mid-August.

The Performing Live season is starting off well. Currently we are close to \$800,000 in ticket sales for the new season, putting us approximately half-way to our goal for the year.

MAC has been interviewing for a new PR Manager following the departure of Sarah Moran. An offer has been made and accepted, and Casey Blake will begin on August 26.

The Arts and Culture Department did a Strategic Plan a couple of years ago and are in the process of updating that plan. MAC will be working on a Strategic Planning Process over the coming two years.

Ms. Ornstein is exploring the development of a Community Cultural Plan. There is an updated General Plan for the City underway that has three guiding principles in the draft form, and public spaces and cultural resources are imbedded in one of those principles. Ms. Ornstein would like to reach out to the community to get a sense of their needs and desires in arts and culture. She stated that when we get to community meetings, it would be wonderful if the Board members would be involved in those conversations.

Alyssia Yingling asked if the programming at Eastmark and ASU Poly would be the same as here on our campus. Ms. Ornstein said that programming there would be unique to their needs and some would be the same as here at MAC. Randy Vogel is paying special attention when booking for the FY14-15 season looking at artists where there may be opportunities to explore bringing that artist to their campus. This way both campuses benefit and costs can be shared.

Ms. Ornstein shared that the exterior painting is just about finished at MAC and construction of the Alliance Pavilion is underway.

Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Karina Wilhelm enrolled her daughter in Summer Camp at MAC, and her daughter is enjoying that. She also took them to the Target 3 For Free Sunday at Arizona Museum for Youth and the Arizona Museum of Natural History. There were lots of people and the kids had a lot of fun. She had a co-worker who reached out to ask her about the yarn bombing here at MAC during spark! Mesa's Festival of Creativity. Apparently they are hoping to do a yarn bombing this fall and they are looking for ideas.

Dr. Robbi Venditti said she continues to attend her glass blowing class.

Joe Cooper reported that he took his son to the Arizona Museum for Youth. He and his wife agreed it was a fast track to nap time for everyone, because they used so much energy.

The next scheduled meeting date is September 26, 2012, 4 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 and the Board members who were interested were provided a behind-the-scenes tour back-of-house.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Ornstein, Director, Arts & Culture Department